

## **GREENSBORO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

**Wednesday, May 14, 2008 – 6:00pm**

**Windsor Recreation Center – 1601 E. Lee Street**

**PRESENT:** John Beaman, Jr., Paul Brown, Ken Free, Lori Galbreath (excused 7:56), David Hoggard (arrived 6:04), Rose Marie Ponton

**ABSENT:** Marc Bush, Randy Scott

**STAFF PRESENT:** Steve Branson, Candice Bruton, Adrienne Byrd, Erica Chadwick, Mitzi Dew, Jennifer Hance, Courtney Hemphill, John Hughes, Darryl Kosciak, Bonnie Kuester, Mary Alice Kurr-Murphy, Dan Maxson, Darius Oliver, Marcie Richardson, Mike Simpson, Laurie Thore, Chris Wilson

**OTHERS:** Roger Bardsley (Guilford County), Russ Clegg (Housing and Community Development), Charles Cranfield (Guilford Courthouse National Military Park Superintendent), Otto Harris (Police Department), Bob Morgan (Deputy City Manager), Andy Nelson (Guilford County Parks and Recreation Commission)

The regular meeting of the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Commission was held at Windsor Recreation Center. Rose Marie Ponton, Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

*The meeting was then turned over David Hoggard, Chair.*

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the March 12, 2008 Commission Meeting were approved as submitted.

### **Recognition**

Bonnie Kuester, Director, recognized the Parks and Recreation April Employee of the Month, Jennifer Hance and May Employee of the Month, Mitzi Dew.

### **Guilford-PAL Presentation**

Otto Harris, Chairman, Board for the Guilford Police Athletics League, stated that the Guilford Police Athletics League was established in August 2007. The vision of the Guilford Police Athletic League, who has chartered with the NC Police Athletic League and National Police Athletic League, is to establish a link between the residential community, police community, and faith community. Our goal is to give youth somewhere to go, something to do, and someone to be. Since January of this year every Friday night, with exception of the fourth Friday night each month, a community night out has been held at Windsor Recreation Center. This involves positive speakers, arts, recreation activities, food and more. Windsor Center is the first location for this program with hopes of expanding to every recreation center throughout the city.

Robert Cooper, Executive Director for Guilford-PAL, stated that they are bringing resources into the community which is involving youth and then developing youth as leaders. Cooper stated that Guilford-PAL is connected to National PAL which has been around since 1910. Law enforcement attends the Friday night events for security and to interact with the youth to build relationships. Cooper thanked the Commission for their support and invited them to attend community night out.

Darius Willis, President of the Youth Leadership Council (YLC), stated that YLC has three different levels, elementary school, middle school, and high school. Everyone is given the opportunity to be a part of this Council with no commitment of holding a position. We travel throughout the state and country educating youth on how to write grants, complete employment applications, resume's, etc. Within the next couple of months we are going to start a program of opening our own business to see what it takes to open a business.

In regard to Guilford-PALS, Harris stated they hoped when the program began to have 25 youth attend. The least number in attendance has been 75 and the most in attendance was approximately 350, averaging 110 since the program began. As we expand we hope to bring in national and state programs.

Hoggard inquired about funding.

Harris replied stating that current funding primarily comes from grants, local corporations and fundraising.

Rose Marie Ponton, Commissioner, inquired as to when this program plans to venture out to other areas in the city.

Harris replied stating that the program will continue at Windsor Center and plans to begin branching out to another center in June 2008 with a goal of this program being at all centers by 2010.

Hoggard thanked the program coordinators for their efforts and requested future updates.

### **Windsor Recreation Center Presentation**

Erica Chadwick, Windsor Center Director, presented the Commission with historical information about Windsor Recreation Center and programs currently held there.

## **SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Laura E. Jackson**, 2615 W. Court St., 27407 spoke in favor of a bridge being placed in Ardmore Park to replace one that was removed in the past. She requested funds from the Small Neighborhood Park Program to build the bridge. The park is located in the center of the neighborhood and not having a bridge makes entering and exiting the park very difficult.

Bob Morgan, Deputy City Manager, stated that he has been working on this project with the Ardmore community for approximately five years. The cost to build a bridge is \$100,000. We typically don't give the entire \$100,000 that's distributed from the Small Neighborhood Park Program to one neighborhood; however this neighborhood has tried to get a bridge for quite some time. The City Manager's Office will recommend to City Council that this bridge be funded by the Neighborhood Small Project Program as part of the CIP. If any money happens to be left over then we will try to fulfill some of the other neighborhood projects.

*Hoggard recognized Andy Nelson, new Guilford County Parks and Recreation Liaison to the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Commission.*

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Atlantic and Yadkin Greenway**

Mike Simpson, Watershed Parks and Trails Director, stated that on March 12, 2008 he came before the Commission requesting the Commission to consider changing the name of the Lake Brandt Greenway, the Bicentennial Greenway and Summerfield Rail Trail to the Atlantic and Yadkin Greenway. This would provide name consistency and would recognize the history of the railway in Greensboro. Signs were posted beyond 30 days at the most convenient entrances to the greenway alerting the public of our intention to change the name of those three greenways to the Atlantic and Yadkin Greenway. Simpson stated that he received three phone calls, all in support of renaming the greenways, but did not receive any opposition. Simpson requested the Commission's final consideration.

### **Action Taken**

**A motion was made by John Beaman, Jr. and seconded by Rose Marie Ponton to rename the Lake Brandt Greenway, the Bicentennial Greenway and the Summerfield Rail Trail to the Atlantic and Yadkin Greenway. A vote in favor was unanimous.**

### **CIP**

Candice Bruton, Planning and Project Development Manager, distributed the Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Program (CIP) list of projects. Bruton stated that at the February Commission meeting the Commission was presented with the CIP list which was produced under the direction of the Commission CIP subcommittee. The subcommittee met twice in January then came before the Commission in February where the Commission adopted the CIP as it was presented. Guidance was later received by Budget and Evaluation relating to potential bond amounts and time frames. The subcommittee met once more in April to give staff direction in terms of what the CIP priorities may be. Bruton then turned the presentation over to David Hoggard.

Hoggard mentioned the projects on the CIP list in priority order. Those projects include an increase in athletic fields (artificial turf at Hester Park, field renovations at Bryan Park and a Keeley Park athletic complex), totaling approximately 8 million dollars and is privy to a proposed 2010 bond referendum. Park reinvestments are next on the list such as, tennis court repairs, Greenhill Cemetery maintenance facility, etc. totaling approximately 16 million dollars. Hoggard stated that the subcommittee felt it was important to reinvest in our own infrastructure. They have a lot in need of repair and if we can't take care of what we have why build new things. Replacements and upgrades for existing pools are needed costing approximately 21 million dollars. This amount also includes a new central pool. We have not had a new pool in this city for quite a long time and the subcommittee felt it important. Pool replacements would be for Warnersville, Windsor, Peeler and Smith Recreation Centers. Thirteen million dollars would go towards facility investments, such as Gateway Gardens Phase II, Brown Recreation Center expansion, a restroom at Gillespie Golf Course, etc. All this combined totals 59.5 million dollars. This is aggressive especially with what has recently happened with the County Parks and Recreation bond. This board is committed to being advocates for the CIP and pushes to be the biggest advocates the city has. These are high priorities.

Hoggard continued stating that also identified were items for a proposed 2012 bond referendum such as land acquisition, costing 5.7 million dollars, a future park and facility development near the eastern loop and I-40, a Reedy Fork Recreation Center, a community park in south Greensboro, and development of a new regional park all totaling approximately 21 million dollars. Land is not getting cheaper and we must start thinking about this now.

Bruton stated that as more input and direction is received from Budget and Evaluation, the City Manager's Office, or others we will return to the Commission with updates.

Hoggard stated that this is still a working document.

Beaman inquired if the Fisher Park walking trails mentioned on the list is at the request of the community. Years ago the community was extremely resistant to anything being done there. Beaman also inquired if the pool development for central Greensboro is indoors and what is the location.

In response to the Fisher Park walking trails, Bruton replied stating yes. Bruton stated that the pool for central Greensboro is anticipated to be indoors located in central Greensboro so that it is accessible to the majority of the people, but a definite location has not been identified. Public input sessions would be conducted before moving forward. This is envisioned to be a competitive and leisure facility.

Hoggard added that the swim community needs to be involved as they could bring a lot to the table.

Beaman inquired what the Teen Center is envisioned to be.

John Hughes, Program and Community Services Manager, replied stating this would be for a recreation facility to house the Youth First Program, Greensboro Youth Council and other youth activities.

Ponton stated that the pool would be a year round facility whereas our current pools are only used a couple of months throughout the year and this would facilitate everyone year round. Our park investment the city has budgeted for in the past but has gone by the wayside.

### **Action Taken**

**A motion was made by Paul Brown and seconded by Lori Galbreath to submit the Capital Improvement Program to the City Manager's Office. A vote in favor was unanimous.**

### **Budget Update**

Dan Maxson, Administrative Services Manager, stated that in early April the City Manager's Office received instructions from City Council on the types of budgets they were looking for. The City Manager presented a couple of proposed budgets, one with a 2.5% tax increase and one without an increase. A no tax increase required discussions of some reductions that impacted Parks and Recreation. As reported in the newspaper, one item was to delay operational costs for Keeley Park and Gateway Garden for one year. The impact of this is very minimal since the construction process was originally anticipated for July 1, 2009. Another category of the no tax increase proposal affects our lakes operations. Roster employees who receive an average of 20 hours a week and are non-benefited employees would be eliminated. Currently they help us during peak season from spring thru fall. This item was on the table for discussion last year and was put back on the table this year at the request of the City Manager. This would result in changing the operating schedules for the lakes. For example, Lake Townsend and Lake Brandt will remain open on weekends and Lake Higgins would be closed. There will be a marina at one of our lakes in operation seven days a week. This will be well publicized so that citizens are aware.

Maxson continued stating that the City Manager will present the budget on Tuesday, May 20, 2008. Through the budget process City Council will accept public input before officially adopting the budget. At this point we have met our targets to present a budget that meets City Council's priorities. The Commission will meet prior to the adoption of the budget to discuss any other issues.

Maxson stated that part of the City Council's and City Manager's instructions were to look into 49 full-time benefited positions across the city that could be eliminated and each department had to identify 2% of their full-time positions. Parks and Recreation represented four of those positions. The criteria used by departments was does the position provide a direct public service, a direct customer relations/service type position and the tenure of the position. As with any business or agency, one of the areas looked at is administration because typically it is not a direct public service. With our list of four positions two positions in administration were among the list for the City Manager's Office to consider. One is a position that recently became vacant that is in charge of program and evaluation for our department and a portion of the job was working on our national accreditation. The second position is the Resource Coordinator position. The City has a reduction in force policy that states that the City will assist locating a position within the city for an employee if they're placed in a reduction in force status. Our Resource Coordinator, Courtney Hemphill, has done a remarkable job with our grant procedures. Courtney has looked at other positions within the city. The remaining staff would assume responsibilities left from this position making sure that grants and sponsorships continue. The other two positions were maintenance related positions, which were vacant positions.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Connectivity Plan**

Chris Wilson, Parks, Gardens and Program Support Manager, recognized in attendance Glen Dobrogosz, Natural Science Center Director, Roger Bardsley, Guilford County, and Charles Cranfield, Guilford Courthouse National

Military Park Superintendent. Wilson stated that months ago conversations began about the natural connectivity of certain facilities in Greensboro, most importantly Country Park, the Natural Science Center, and the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park. Discussions continued about connecting these facilities. During times with an economic struggle not only do we have to make hard choices, we have to look at priorities, how to stimulate the economy and what we can do to get people to come visit us. Greensboro is one of the top 50 places in the country to live; therefore we want to continue being one of those places that people want to come to see and live. Wilson believes that we have developed a concept that is phenomenal and an opportunity to bring people to Greensboro and stay overnight. Wilson then turned the presentation over to Charles Cranfield.

Cranfield stated that during the initial stages of this concept 4 years ago discussions began about sharing resources and bringing people to all the parks in the area. We have shared resources already, for example, the military park purchased gates for the Military Park and Country Park. Country Park staff then installed the gates which saved approximately \$3,000. More discussions took place and an agreement was developed between the two parks to share resources.

Cranfield continued stating that the first part of last year the new Park Service Director in Washington talked about 2016 being the Centennial for the National Park Service and as part of the Centennial is interested in obtaining additional funding for parks. A Centennial initiative was born with the idea of 100 million dollars going towards partnership projects in parks each year from 2008-2016.

Cranfield presented a conceptual plan that would interconnect all the areas internally. Currently there is not an easy connection between Tannenbaum Historic Park, Guilford Courthouse, Country Park, Jaycee Park, and the Natural Science Center.

Approximately 3 years ago a historic landscape report was completed in the Military Park which reported that the Visitor's Center, built in 1975, is in between the first and second lines of battle. The landscape architect suggested the Visitor's Center be removed and perhaps combining the Colonial Heritage Center with the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park Visitor's Center. A road system was developed combining the parks. This road could be closed to drive thru traffic, just as Country Park is on weekends, and provide a trolley service serving all the park areas of Tannenbaum Park, the Military Park, Country Park, Jaycee Park and the Natural Science Center. Cranfield stated that he has considered this plan as part of the Centennial initiative proposal. Cranfield stated that 2017 is the Guilford Courthouse National Military Parks Centennial.

Cranfield presented a current and proposed future map of these areas.

Cranfield stated that one of the important things about this project is the expansion of opportunity for visitors. Guilford Courthouse National Military Park is not appropriate to allow recreational activities on the battlefield. Having connectivity to Country Park and Jaycee Park would provide recreational opportunity and would be important to help preserve the integrity and memorial of the Military Park.

The Military Park visitation 2 years ago was over 400,000. With these 400,000 visitors a year we create 415 jobs in the community and annual revenue for restaurants, hotels, etc. of 18 million dollars. Cranfield believes this plan will expand and benefit the city financially. A trolley service would provide greater visitor protection with fewer cars on the park roads. This will increase visitor knowledge historically, culturally and scientifically and provide greater recreational opportunities.

Potential partners consist of City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation, Natural Science Center, Chamber of Commerce, Guilford Battleground Company, Piedmont Land Conservancy, Community Foundation, and Guilford County.

The presentation was then turned over to Glen Dobrogosz, Natural Science Center Director.

Dobrogosz informed the Commission that the Natural Science Center is North Carolina's only AZA and AAM Accredited attraction. Attendance last fiscal year was 257,000 and an expectation of 275,000 this year. According to a competition study of members and non-members completed by MBA students at UNC-G, the Natural Science Center came in second and the NC Zoo came in first. Some of our current positive indicators are: visitation has increased to 34%, memberships have increased by 50%, education visitation has expanded from 15 surrounding counties to 24 counties, NC county visitation has grown from 35 counties to 81 counties, and national visitation is 475 counties. Out of 250,000 visitors 61% are from Guilford County, 31% from outside Guilford County NC counties, and 8% is out of state. Keys to success are due from the 2000 bond, new leadership at all levels, new additions to the Science Center such as, Science City, USA Master Plan, Lean and Mean Education Machine (this fits the needs of specific curricular guidelines of Guilford County Schools). Also from being AZA and AAM Accredited, expanding partnerships, and offering a college degree program (ZAS). The Natural Science Center offers new attractions with other new attractions forthcoming that surrounding cities do not offer.

Dobrogosz stated that they have written a grant for \$50,000 to assist in paying for the study of the connectivity.

### **Tannenbaum Park Opportunity**

Chris Wilson introduced members of the Guilford Battleground Company (GBC), Tom Phillips, Ed Deaton, Jim Kirkpatrick, John Beaman, Jr., and Rose Marie Ponton. Wilson stated that they come before the Commission with a proposal for the Commission to consider and is something the City has looked upon favorably. Wilson then turned the presentation over to Jim Kirkpatrick.

Kirkpatrick distributed to the Commission a list of Guilford Battleground Company members and a copy of the resolution from GBC of this proposal.

Kirkpatrick stated that this journey with Tannenbaum Park started 25 years ago with a group of volunteers including himself, Ed Deaton, Rose Marie Ponton and Tom Phillips. There were parts of land at the corner of 220N and New Garden Road that included the Hoskins house which was believed to be at that time the last remaining structure from the Battle at Guilford Courthouse. We formed a non-profit organization called the Guilford Battleground Company to raise the money to buy the 6 acre property that consisted of the Hoskins house to restore it to what it looked like in 1781 and to eventually to build a visitor's center on site, now known as the Heritage Center. We gave this to the City of Greensboro. The park has stayed separate from the National Guilford Courthouse Military Park even though it was our original intent to have it in the National Military Park since it is part of the battlefield. We have always felt that Tannenbaum Park should be a part of the Military Park.

Kirkpatrick stated that the Guilford Battleground Company is proposing a resolution to the Commission for the City of Greensboro to give Tannenbaum Park and the Colonial Heritage Center to the federal government. We are proposing that the National Park Service to operate Tannenbaum Park and the Colonial Heritage Center on the same hours that it is operating today for the next 2 years. We are also proposing that eventually the park be open just as the Military Park. The National Park Service would continue to maintain the Colonial Heritage Center portion that tells the story of the civilians that lived in our area around the time of the battle. All naming rights to the galleries would remain. The Tannenbaum family has been very instrumental in our park and has approved this resolution.

Kirkpatrick stated that they are requesting the city to endorsing the general concept of giving the land to the Military Park over the next couple of years and rename the Colonial Heritage Center to the Tannenbaum Colonial Heritage Center to recognize the Tannenbaum name.

It is possible that the park visitor's center could be moved to the Colonial Heritage Center over the next few years. If this happens we still believe we should keep separate the Colonial Heritage Center exhibits telling the story of lives of people here in the Piedmont. GBC will continue to be the main support mechanism. We are actively working

with the federal government to buy pieces of property that never made it into the Military Park. Because we are a private nonprofit organization we can move fairly quickly in conjunction with our supporters with the Piedmont Land Conservancy to buy property as it comes on the market. We would then hold it until the federal government can purchase it from us so that it can be part of the park.

Kirkpatrick requested the Commission to endorse the concept of giving Tannenbaum Park to the federal government and to change the name of the Colonial Heritage Center to the Tannenbaum Colonial Heritage Center.

Cranfield informed the Commission that the federal government has agreed to this concept.

John Beaman, Jr., Commissioner stated that this is a positive move and the federal government has much more funding than the City. Unfortunately, I believe Parks and Recreation is only going to get worse over next few years. The ability to go to and from the amenities discussed is going to be incredible.

Wilson stated that the Military Park is currently providing maintenance at Tannenbaum Park which is already providing a savings to us. This would project would be in phases during a 2 year period of time. We would continue to supply staff under Cranfield's direction.

Cranfield stated that the Military Park may be able to provide one full time person. Right now 2 people are being proposed, one person on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and the other person Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Rose Marie Ponton stated that she feels this is the right thing to do and it is certainly best for the future of both parks and will enhance the whole operation.

Paul Brown, Commissioner, inquired if Cranfield will be applying every year up to 2016 for the 100 million dollars that the federal government is offering.

Cranfield replied stating that the concept is in a format to be able to apply for the money, but needs to be formalized if approved by the Commission. Guilford Courthouse National Military Park was the first Revolutionary War Park protected by the federal government in the United States. Senator Burr is on the National Park sub-committee of the Natural Resources Committee Incentive and knows about us, so we have a strong voice in the senate as well as in the congress.

Wilson stated that he believes that this lends itself to opportunities for sponsorships and believes we will have a lot of willing partners.

#### **Action Taken**

**A motion was made by John Beaman, Jr. and seconded by Rose Marie Ponton to approve the resolution that the Guilford Battleground Company has proposed. A vote in favor was unanimous.**

#### **Neighborhood Small Projects Program**

Russ Clegg, Community and Housing Development, stated that the Neighborhood Small Projects Program is a Community and Housing Development Program and is part of the CIP budget that sets aside \$100,000 for small neighborhood projects. Project requests have to be a capital improvement project and must be on city property. Applications are reviewed by 8 different departments and one or two non-city employees. Applications are distributed after the budget is approved and due the last day of October. The team reviews them in January and February and then moves forward as part of the CIP budget. Then it goes to the Planning Board for recommendation with final City Council approval. This year 7 applications were submitted and 3 have made it to this point. Ardmore Park submitted an application to have a new bridge to cross the creek. The second project was Sternberger Park who have requested a bike rack, benches, picnic table, and doggie-pot stations. The third application is from the Aycock

Neighborhood requesting neighborhood signs in two different locations. Once these 3 applications were selected we found out the cost of the bridge was going to potentially use up all the funds from the program; therefore we decided to move the other two projects into next years funding instead of making them reapply.

**Ms. Mayhan**, resident of Ardmore Neighborhood and Speaker from the Floor, spoke in favor of a bridge being placed in Ardmore Park and feels a bridge is necessary for the safety of neighborhood residents.

#### **Action Taken**

**A motion was made by Ken Free and seconded by John Beaman, Jr. to support the Ardmore Neighborhood bridge. A vote in favor was unanimous.**

#### **Park Watch Program**

Wilson stated that Parks and Recreation has been working with the Police Department on the Neighborhood Watch Program. The first phase of this program was flashcams, vandalism deterrent systems. There are now 5 flashcams in our park system and we continue to pursue funding for more as they have been very affective. Locations where the flashcams have been installed have experienced no criminal activity while they have been in place, even the locations where there has been criminal activity on a weekly basis. Residents are begging us to keep the flashcams there and not move them. We are very aggressively trying to pursue more. The second phase was to go out in the community and ask for their help, especially with the neighborhood parks as they are not staffed. We have well over 100 parks and have no way to constantly provide supervision; therefore we have to rely on the community and neighborhoods. Wilson stated that he participated in one of the presentations to a neighborhood association and the feedback was wonderful. These presentations are done in conjunction with the Police Department.

Wilson stated that the Commission has been given brochures that were also given to neighborhoods. The neighborhoods were appreciative receiving the brochures as it gives direction on how to handle situations as they arise, who to call, when to call, and how they can be assisted after the fact. We are hoping the Commission will distribute the brochures and will be ambassadors for us. Brooks Mullane, Candice Bruton, Steve Branson along with myself are willing to go to neighborhood associations and discuss this program.

#### **SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR**

- NONE -

#### **DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS**

Kuester expressed thanks to those who presented tonight and to the Commission for attending Commission meetings and taking time for extra meetings to help the department move forward. We have a great partnership with Guilford-PALS with their plans to help young people in Greensboro. We do hope that it grows to all centers.

Kuester stated that the Commission has been invited to GYC's and Youth First's annual events, MUSEP, and more.

#### **COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS**

**Paul Brown** inquired about communication efforts with City Council. Brown stated that he will be coordinating a Greensboro Grasshopper's ball game outing with the Commission and staff. More information will be forthcoming.

Kuester replied stating that because of the budget process the agenda's for the briefing schedules are tight and once we get through the fiscal year then we should be able to communicate more with City Council.



**Ken Free** stated that he is concerned with the gas price situation and with the economy's situation recreation will no longer exist. We need to take a strong stand with City Council and educate them. Council is not as educated about Parks and Recreation as this Commission and this Commission needs to be advocates for Parks and Recreation.

**Rose Marie Ponton** stated that people move to Greensboro for our Parks and Recreation. Ponton stated that she's glad to see the new things staff has been working on which will be a benefit to our department and the City.

**David Hoggard** thanked staff for the Parks and Recreation facilities tour last month. Hoggard expressed concern that there are not nets on the outside basketball courts at Windsor Recreation Center. Hoggard also stated that several months ago the Commission and staff discussed creating a policy on the department receiving facility gifts and having to maintain these gifts. Hoggard would like to keep this item open for consideration.

With no further business Hoggard adjourned the meeting at 8:21 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcie Richardson, Executive Assistant  
Greensboro Parks and Recreation